

# Unlucky Arithmetic

## Thirteen Ways to Raise a Non-Writer

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- 1** Tell children that **writers write at desks**, not under them and most certainly not on the carpet.
- 2** **Correct all misspellings**, including letters spelled backwards; Howe kaan wee reed mistaaks? Puuulease.
- 3** Squash the talk. Writing is for learning vocabulary and sentence structure. **Talk is time away** from thinking about their writing.
- 4** Absolutely, positively no writing-in-the-style-of another author. Children have to **find** their **own voice**.
- 5** Don't encourage drawing in writer's notebooks. They're for writing, obviously. If you allow drawing though, **ignore the scribbles**. There's no story there. Promise.
- 6** Once kids learn how to spell, throw out the markers and crayons. **Only use pencil**. That way, mistakes can be erased.
- 7** There is a time for reading and a time for writing. By no means mix the two. **It can get confusing**.
- 8** **Limit writing** on the computer. Serious writing only happens on the page.
- 9** Under **no** circumstances **talk about the relationship** between art and language in picture books. It's right there; they can figure it out, surely.
- 10** **Lined paper is for writing**, unlined paper is for drawing. Get it right. If you don't, who will?
- 11** Children are **writers-in-waiting**. You already know how to write so you don't need to keep a writer's notebook, they do.
- 12** Make sure children revise and edit on days set aside for revision and editing. There is a **writerly plan – stick to it**.
- 13** **Avoid showing** children **your own writing** (if you do it); they're more interested in published writing, not yours. Come on.

